

Anderson, Bryan

From: Kristen Powers <lm5051pal@att.net>
Sent: Friday, February 15, 2019 11:03 AM
To: LABTestimony
Subject: Paid Family Medical Leave

IN SUPPORT OF PAID MEDICAL LEAVE BILLS SB-1 AND HB-5003

Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and members of the Labor & Public Employees Committee,

My name is Kristen Powers, a life-long resident of Connecticut and the current Political Action Liaison for AFT CT Healthcare, Lawrence and Memorial Hospital, Federation of Technologists, Local 5051.

I would like to express my greatest support in favor of Paid Family Medical Leave. Unfortunately, I was unable to come to the Capital to testify. There are so many reasons why all legislators should be in favor of these bills.

First and foremost, having paid family medical leave would allow employees the ability to take the time off they need without incurring a debilitating financial loss. As most people are aware by now, so many of today's working people live paycheck-to-paycheck. Without paid leave, medical issues are negatively compounded. Simply put, supporting this bill will dramatically improve the quality of life for anyone in need of taking medical leave.

Second, every working person is included, even the self-employed. This is huge in my opinion and I can speak from experience. My husband is self-employed. He is covered under my medical benefits but does not have a disability plan. Disability insurance is seriously expensive and unaffordable. He needed to have a 2-level spinal fusion 3 years ago and was unable to work at his job for almost an entire year. The earnings loss was great and we will be paying off the debt we incurred for a very long time. It would be incredible to contribute a very small % into a family medical leave plan on a weekly basis rather than what happened to us.

Third, Connecticut needs to be competitive and have a plan like this to attract employees and keep employees. According to NCLS, the National Conference of State Legislatures, 10 states plus Washington, D.C. currently require paid sick leave. Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont and New York are in our back yard.

The 1993 Federal Family and Medical Leave Act does allow an employee to take 12 weeks of unpaid medical leave if they work for a company that has 50 or more employees. According to the NCLS, "While these protections cover 60% of the workforce, evidence suggests that many eligible employees do not take leave when they need it because they cannot afford it."

My hope is that all of the legislators can work together to make this a reality.

Sincerely,

Kristen Powers
298 Lestertown Rd
Groton, CT 06340

Kristen Powers
Local 5051 AFTCT Healthcare